

# REVOLUTION

socialist youth movement

ISSUE 88

## TAKE THAT ISRAEL!

PALESTINIANS BREAK THE  
SIEGE OF GAZA!



### also inside

• it's profit stupid • 90 year's of women's right? • elections for new ruler of the world update • US writers' strike • and more...

# a word from the editor

★ BY LUKE ★ LONDON ★

As we went to press historic scenes were unfolding in Gaza, as a huge number of impoverished, starving Palestinians, who had been placed under a stage of siege by Israel and the West, crossed the Egyptian border in order to buy essential goods. We express our total solidarity with this act of defiance. In the west we urgently need to organise a massive campaign to end the siege of Gaza. It's good to see that some demonstrations are now being organised by Palestine solidarity groups internationally. Recently, around 500 people marched in London and, in Leeds, Revolution and Palestine Solidarity Group activists organised a march of 100 people from the university to the city centre.

We are also pleased to report the success of our protest in London against E-On. We put the corporate polluter on the spot, demanding that it dropped its plans to build a new coal fired power station in Medway, Kent.

We are making plans to follow up this work with a youth and students climate conference and Revolution activists conference later in the spring. Check out our website ([www.worldrevolution.org.uk](http://www.worldrevolution.org.uk)) for the latest information on these plans. Our webmaster has also re-organised the website to make it much easier to access the material you want - so check it out.

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**TAKING ACTION! E-ON PROTEST ON YOUTUBE!**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70whcF-f7Us>

# HOLLYWOOD GRIPPED BY WRITERS STRIKE

★ BY DAVIN ★ UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA ★

The Writer's Guild of America (WGA), representing some 12,000 television and radio writers, continues its now three month long strike against the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP). Negotiations for a new contract reached an impasse last November over two key issues. First, the AMPTP has refused to negotiate on how much writers' get from DVD and home video sales - in the current system they get just 0.3% of this revenue.

When this contract was first drawn up movie makers argued videos were an "unproven" market and committed writers to this agreement. But now studios earn the majority of their income (over \$4.8 billion between January and March this year) from this "unproven" market. Feeling cheated, the WGA requested an increase to 0.6%, which AMPTP have rejected out of hand.

Also at the heart of the conflict is the issue of "new media" sales. Writers currently receive no compensation for the sale of internet downloads, which is an enormous emerging market. For example, Apple alone has sold over 125 million TV shows. The AMPTP are still only offering a derisory 0.3% of this market, while writers demand 2.5%. Refusing to share billions in profits with writers, the AMPTP has shown it is more interested in shutting down the industry than reaching a fair deal. The AMPTP reacted harshly to the strike, firing low-level staff from halted programs. Many programs bent to the will of the broadcast corporations, returning to the air without their writers in an attempt to save the jobs of their non-writing staff. Meanwhile, mainstream media, controlled by corporations in the AMPTP, have paid little attention to the issue despite its impact on the economy.



# COAL POWER? NO WAY!

★ BY JO ★ UCL (LONDON) ★

At the end of 2007, Gordon Brown claimed there would be 'hard choices and tough decisions' to be made in the battle to cut carbon emissions and halt climate change. However so far there has been no sign of these 'hard choices'. In fact Brown's green rhetoric has proven to be empty as he continues to bend over backwards for big business while putting fighting climate change on the back burner. Brown is now faced with his "toughest decision" yet: whether to approve the proposed new Kingsnorth coal-fired power station in Medway, Kent. German energy company E-on's application for the new power station was passed by Medway council on the 3rd of January and the application now lies on Brown's desk awaiting his approval. If it succeeds it will be the first in a whole new generation of coal power stations which are planned (seven other proposals are currently waiting behind Kingsnorth).

The New Labour government remains committed to coal despite its promises to generate 20% of Britain's total energy from renewables by 2020 and even though coal is the dirtiest form of energy production. In fact the Kingsnorth power station would emit over eight million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year - that's more than thirty developing countries. Building new coal power plants is about profit. The price of coal has been falling and is now cheaper to burn than the less-polluting natural gas. Plus, coal is relatively plentiful, but while there is not an immediate shortage of natural gas much of it is in Russia - whose President Putin is hardly a darling of the western powers at the moment.

E-On is a classic corporate polluter which tries to paint itself green to avoid criticism for its contribution to global warming. E-On's project is 'diversification' of energy sources; but of course in reality 'diversification' means that while E-on has built wind farms, it also wants to continue to build and maintain coal power stations. While their website boasts that their offices are now one degree cooler to preserve energy, half of the energy they produce still

comes from fossil fuels and they are staunch supporters and developers of nuclear power. E-on is the world's 53rd largest company and one glance at their profits will show us that their interests lie firmly in protecting these - not the environment. With assets worth a staggering \$168 billion in 2006 it made a cool \$6.4 billion in profit. E-on's greenwash excuse for the Kingsnorth power station is that it will be able to be upgraded with carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology. CCS is a means of separating out carbon dioxide when burning fossil fuels and then storing it either underground or under the sea bed. This if viable would be a big advancement in cutting carbon emissions. Unfortunately it seems to be just another false solution offered up by the profit hungry energy companies to allow them to continue burning fossil fuels. There are no operating CCS plants in the world and the new station at Kingsnorth will only be able to incorporate the technology if it becomes viable in the future and there is no timescale on when this may be - if ever. A UN report predicted that CCS would not play any significant role for decades and even Chancellor Alistair Darling admitted the technology 'may never work'.

Opposing Kingsnorth shouldn't be confused with NIMBYism (not in my back yard-ism). The effects on the climate of the carbon emissions pumped out by coal power stations are felt internationally. Britain should be (in one of the richest and most polluting countries in the world) the lead the fight against climate change. If the campaign against Kingsnorth is successful this will be an important victory in the struggle. But of course, being next to a huge dirty coal emitting power station is hardly great! Medway is already the most polluted part of the country thanks to the pollution that arrives there from London. The campaign against the power station should incorporate the local working class to fight against coal power and for investment into renewables without any job losses in the area. There was already evidence of extensive objection to the project when the council received nine thousand complaints from locals.

# E-ON PROTEST!

★ BY LUKE ★ LSE (LONDON) ★

*Stop Kingsnorth! No more Coal! and climate change kills the poor* were some of the chants of students and activists from the Revolution, Campaign against Climate Change, the LSE Green Party and the World Development Movement, as they protested outside E-On's offices on Friday 25th January.

E-On is the company behind the planning application to build a new coal fired power station at Kingsnorth, in Medway, Kent. If the application is accepted by Gordon Brown it'll be the first coal powered station to be built in the UK for thirty four years. The protest was initiated by Revolution students and had attracted the support of other groups who joined the protest.

As we said on the demonstration, more coal power means more global warming - full stop. If these plans get the go ahead they will indicate the total failure of Brown's government to match it's climate rhetoric with climate action. E-On are pursuing these plans despite making frequent reference to their green credentials and the (relatively limited) investments they are making in renewable energy sources. Unfortunately, representatives from E-On declined to speak to us on the day - despite the fact we had prepared an A2 letter of complaint to hand into their offices. The protest also got lots of heavy-handed attention from the police - and all four vans of them made sure we weren't going up to the sixth floor of their offices (with our megaphone and flags) to hand in our letter.

There were about 30 of us on the day including students from Westminster, Essex, LSE and the University of Southampton. The fight against climate change is obviously of enormous importance to us all. We urgently need to build a youth and students movement taking direct action and exposing the Green wash hypocrisy coming from the corporations and governments. Fighting on issues like Kingsnorth and the Heathrow expansion will be absolutely critical to building it.

★ ONE WORLD ★ ONE BATTLE ★

REVOLUTION 3

# ...the final crisis?

Labour tops moves to shut down last remaining democracy in the National Union of Students

★ BY LUKE ★ LSE (LONDON) ★

Ever heard of the National Union of Students? If you're at university or college then you're probably a member of it - whether you realised or not. Look on the back of your student card and you'll probably see a corporate looking "NUS" logo. I'm told in some high street shops you get a 10% discount for flashing it at the shop assistance... For those people who have some vague notion of what the NUS is, then this is often the limit of their interest in the organisation that makes much of its status as "Europe's largest student union".

The NUS has long held a corporate outlook. It's leadership is dominated by "non-political independents" (read *highly political and right wing*) and the equally right wing Labour Students. They both see national leadership positions in NUS as an important first step up their career ladder. There's no coincidence that with a leadership like this the NUS was useless when it came to fighting the big attack faced by our generation of students; the introduction of fees (then top up fees) for degree courses. Blowing the annual campaigns budget on a single demonstration that they hardly spent any time building became the norm year on year.

Now the NUS leadership are proposing a series of reforms that will effectively shut down what limited democracy exists in the NUS. The "governance review" was agreed by a majority at an "extraordinary conference" of the NUS in December and is now set to be debated at the

annual conference on the 1st to 3rd April. If passed it will see the role of the annual conference massively reduced with only one delegate attending from each student union, with no elections required for that one delegate on campuses. The national executive will be scrapped and replaced by a board of "trustees" including non-students.

The aim of the review is to keep politics out of the NUS and turn it into a fully-corporate, market orientated association for - they hope - equally apolitical, corporate student unions. I'm told that by gutting the NUS of any vestiges of radical politics then a whole number of financial opportunities and tax incentives will be opened up to the NUS bureaucracy.

## What kind of students union?

History tells us that student movements can change society, inspiring the working class and poor to take action around radical political demands. This year is the 40th anniversary of the great student rebellions of 1968 where across Western Europe and America students



awoke from their political slumber and launched mobilisations and occupations for democratic and educational rights, and against the brutal war being waged by the United States in Vietnam.

In Pakistan this year students have risked heavy repression opposing the military regime of President Musharraf. Their actions have defied a twenty year long ban on secular, leftists and democratic student organisations on campuses and they've discussed forming a new student organisation to take forward the struggle.

The last two years in France has seen students come to the fore and build protests against the CPE (an employment law that would take away young workers' rights) and against the first steps towards privatisation of education that are being taken by the current Sarkozy govern-



ment. In France students can be a member of number of different student unions - some more radical than others - and the movements of the last years has been organised through a national co-ordination of delegates from schools, colleges and universities across France.

From '68 to today students movements have formed co-ordinations and new organisations to take forward their demands. But the NUS on the other hand is pretty peculiar. It is funded by state money - student unions are funded by universities and a proportion of this then goes to the NUS. The NUS always talks about its financial problems, but it sustains a pampered bureaucracy, which spends much of its time negotiating business deals on behalf of individual unions. It is also semi-compulsory, as you have to "opt out" of membership when you go to university or college.

So, it would be pretty darn silly to go round peddling the idea that this kind of organisation could be "won" to the leadership of revolutionary socialists or even radicals. Of course, it couldn't. The moment it even looked likely the

state would force a split and take its money elsewhere. So, the problem with the NUS is not just its right wing leadership but is much more fundamental. At one level, the governance review reforms just take all the negative realities of the NUS to their logical conclusion. Basically, we may be just over the channel from France, but the politics and organisation of the NUS is world away from the radical French student's movement.

## So, what is to be done? ... as they say

For all the problems with the NUS it would be pretty stupid for us to roll over and accept the governance review reforms. If leftist politics is forced out of the NUS it would be a defeat for all those people who want to build a radical student movement. The annual conference has seen important fights for instance - over whether to oppose the Iraq war, or stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people against Israel. Whether motions are won or loss, the conference can be a good time for campaigners to

network and strengthen their work at a grass roots level.

Sure, some left groups spend a disproportionate amount of their political lives in the NUS bureaucracy. But that doesn't mean fighting within the NUS can't be a stepping stone to building a movement and, for that matter, a real, fighting students organisation. We need to get as many people opposed to the governance review delegated to the NUS conference. We should use conference (outside as well as inside the meeting hall) to organise and strengthen links.

There are a series of key demands that students need to be organised around today: for the immediate withdrawal of US/UK troops from Iraq and Afghanistan and freedom for Palestine; for workers' solidarity - no to Brown's pay cut; fight racism against Muslims and migrants - open the borders; stop climate change - cut the fossil fuels; no to fees and no to privatisation. Whatever the outcome of NUS conference, it is by fighting on these issues that we can take steps towards a radical students union.

# it's profit stupid!

★ BY REBECCA ★ LEEDS ★

This month Inenco, an energy and environmental consultancy firm, has said that Britain is likely to face a shortfall in electricity production in the next 5 to 7 years. This is because a number of nuclear and coal-fired power plants are being decommissioned, as they have reached the end of their productive life. These plants account for a seventh of Britain's electricity capacity.

The government's solution to this is to commission private companies to build new nuclear, gas and coal-fired power plants to maintain electricity production, while also throwing in some wind-power to show their "green" side. It's widely accepted that carbon emissions are causing climate change - something that is already destroying lives and infrastructures through floods, droughts, fires and stands to cause even greater disaster - so why is it that new gas and coal power stations are being built?

The fact is that gas, coal and nuclear power are profitable for private companies and the

government wants to give them all the profits they can - at the expense of the environment and our safety. With a recession looking likely, Gordon Brown is investing in infrastructure to try and keep the British economy afloat, and renewable energy isn't as profitable as gas and fossil fuels. Nuclear energy doesn't produce carbon, but it is dangerous and shouldn't be put in the hands of private companies who will cut corners for the sake of making money. While it doesn't produce carbon when it creates energy, nuclear power isn't "carbon free" as the government claims because it requires an enormous amount of energy to build the plants in the first place.

The National Audit Office has reported that the cost of decommissioning the current nuclear power plants will be £73bn - if the private companies are going to build the next ones will they pay this much to clean up after themselves when the stations get old? No way. They will either make the public pay or will do a bad job of it and endanger us all.

Last year in Canada, MP Linda Kleen who

was head of the country's nuclear watchdog refused to allow a nuclear reactor to restart after it was shut for routine maintenance because some of the safety back-up systems were not working. She said that if they had restarted the reactor then there would have been a 1/1000 chance of failure when the permitted international standard is 1 in a 1 000 000.

We need to oppose the new profit driven drive to nuclear power by the government. Coal, gas and nuclear are disastrous options for the fight against climate change. Let's remember that if we put wind farms all around the coast of Britain we could produce enough energy for the whole national grid. It should be the workers and youth who decide what is built so that we can realistically weigh up the need for energy and the threat of climate change and then come to the best decisions about our future.

## 500 on London demonstration

On 26 January in London 500 people marched calling for an end to siege of Gaza...

### + Kick ass action in Leeds

On the evening of Friday 1st February activists from Leeds University Palestine Solidarity Group and Revolution organised a march of 100 people from the uni to the city centre calling for an end to siege of Gaza. We carried a banner that read "leeds uni against the siege of Gaza" and chanted "from the river to the sea palestine will be free"...



# GAZA SIEGE BROKEN!

★ BY ROSA ★ LEEDS ★

Gaza is a Palestinian territory but it has been under Israeli control since 1967. In the last few years the Israeli's have formally withdrawn and dismantled Zionist settlements inside Gaza. But in reality the Israeli's have sought to turn it into the world's largest open air prison. They have built an enormous wall around the province and over the last year have stopped all food and supplies going in and out of the state putting it in a state of siege.

Shocking but they get away with it. With very few crossing sites - most of which are indefinitely closed and controlled by Israel - the people of Gaza have very little contact with the outside world, if any at all, and this sadly includes food, medical supplies and foreign aid. The situation in Gaza over the last year has been nothing short of desperate.

The background to the siege was a coup by Fatah in the West Bank against the democratically elected Hamas government. Gaza has remained under the elected leadership of Hamas. Soon after Fattah's coup Israeli troops had restricted supply of essential goods like food and water delivered into Gaza. This has been rightly labelled in the press as the siege of Gaza.

The Israeli government claim the siege is to stop rockets being fired into Israel - yet it is blatantly obvious that Israel are trying to starve this small territory into submission and

the collapse of the Hamas government. On the 20th January Gaza's only power plant had to close because it had run out of fuel. Yet Israeli officials claimed it all to be a hoax, staged by Hamas, to get them to end the siege. Remarkably and despite UN reports stating the dire conditions Gaza had been plunged into, Israel kept the embargo going.

## FIGHT BACK!

In the last two weeks a heroic attempt has been made by Gazans to break the siege by entering Egypt at the Rafah border crossing. This met with repression from Egyptian border personnel who used brutal force in an attempt to disperse the mass of people. The Gaza wall had been blown up by militants in the early hours of Wednesday the 23rd January. From sunrise thousands of Palestinians poured into Egypt, risking their lives in search of supplies. Despite demands from Israel for Egypt to seal the border off, the border remains open.

So far thousands of Palestinians have travelled into Egypt, and Egypt has so far allowed the influx of people, despite pressure from US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who called on Egypt to control the border with Gaza. This is not surprising considering that earlier this month, during his tour of the Middle East, George Dubya told Israel to end the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, only to then give \$50 billion dollars in military

aid to Israel.

It was only on the 29th that Egypt closed any of the borders, and even then they still left two checkpoints open. Hamas leader Ismail Haniy, has called for urgent talks with Egypt and his Palestinian rival, President Mahmoud Abbas, on border crossings saying: "We demand that our Arab brethren make a clear, practical and quick decision to take all measures and procedures to practically end the Gaza Strip siege,"

When will the US understand that under an brutal occupation people will rebel, and the incredible events of the last few weeks, goes to show that the people of Gaza are fighting. We in REVOLUTION are fighting with them. Supplies may have withered, food may be scarce and yet the spirit of the Intifada is still there, and shall continue to be there as long as Israel's brutal, racist apartheid state is there to segregate, starve and oppress. There must be an end to the occupation, but it won't come easy. The imperialist powers are prepared to oppress anyone who stands in there.

We demand an end to the imperialist Israeli occupation, destroy the wall and dismantle the Israeli state!

**END THE SEIGE NOW AND VICTORY TO THE PALESTINE PEOPLE!!**

# Kenya election fraud sparks terrible violence

★ BY NAT ★ LONDON ★

January of this year has seen mass protests and violence in Kenya after presidential elections on the 30th December were supposedly won by the previous president Kibaki, leader of the Party of National Unity (PNU). But it quickly became clear that Kibaki (who claimed a tiny majority of 230,000 votes out of 10 million) had rigged the elections. For instance, even the Head of the Election Committee admitted that the turnout in one constituency was 115%! Results were delayed when Odinga, the leader of the opposition party the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), was in the lead. During the delay there were reports of people breaking in to regional balloting stations overnight and adding votes. Kibaki's triumph seems particularly unlikely because in the parliamentary election three days earlier the ODM won over 100 seats compared to only 37 for the PNU.

The ODM originally called for mass protests only to cancel these when the military threatened to repress them. As the crisis deepened violence broke out across the country. Protests have met with harsh repression from the state and there have also been outbreaks of ethnic violence. Of the 850 people killed, many have been shot by the police and army. The violence has displaced around 300,000 people from their homes. 167 rapes have been reported to Nairobi women's hospital alone in the past month - with the youngest victim a 1 year old. These are often gang rapes carried out by groups of armed men.

The last week in January saw this situation intensify, as two opposition MPs were killed. First, one MP was shot outside his home in a suburb of Nairobi on Tuesday. Then just two days later, another was shot dead by a police officer. The police claim the second killing related to a personal dispute, but the ODM

party see it as part of a conspiracy to assassinate their MPs and eliminate them as an opposition party. It has also provoked anger in Eldoret, Too's village in western Kenya. Around 18 people have been killed as a result, including a police officer apparently lynched by a 3,000 strong mob. Whether or not these stories are exaggerated, there have certainly been mass protests: on Friday, hundreds of young men blocked roads with burning tires and rocks, chanting "Kibaki must go".

Contrary to the western media's suggestions, the violence is not just about ethnic conflict. The PNU's unpopularity stems from the majority of the country's desire to get rid of a neoliberal, pro-business and corrupt regime, which has privatised the Kenyan economy, including selling off the railways last year. Booming growth rates of 5% have failed to help lift the vast majority of the Kenyan population out of poverty. At least 46% still live in poverty with wages of only around \$200 per year - while MPs earn a \$60,000! Not surprisingly, Kibaki's support is largely based on the elite.

In contrast, the young men protesting on Friday identified with Too and believed he and the ODM could solve the problems facing them, particularly high unemployment. Local tea, wheat and livestock farmers also saw him as fighting for their interests, and were angered by his killing. In general, these sections of society have supported the ODM throughout the period since the elections.

However, the ODM has completely failed to call or take part in militant actions like those taken by its supporters. Instead, it has called for international sanctions & trade boycotts, and turned, not to the global working class, but to international envoys such as Kofi



Annan of the UN. Annan has shamefully called for all Kenyan leaders, including the opposition, "to avoid any measures or steps that would further compromise the search for an amicable solution to the country's crisis" - completely denying the opposition's right to protests against the stolen election. On February 1st Annan organised a meeting between Odinga and Kibaki where they issued a joint "four point framework" to end the violence. This leaves Odinga with only the strategy of fighting Kibaki's stolen elections through the courts, which is useless as these are full of Kibaki's supporters.

While he has made some anti-neoliberal noises Odinga is fundamentally part of the same political elite as Kibaki. He has no intention of challenging capitalism and private property, which is the real root of poverty in Kenya. He does not present any real solution for workers, peasants and youth of Kenya. Instead of relying on the ODM, the oppressed masses should organise independently, forming committees of action and militias for defence against police and army attacks, and using general strikes to paralyse the government. The aim should be a workers' and peasants' government which takes over the banks, white-owned farms and big businesses; and socialises production, putting an end to neoliberalism, corruption and poverty.



# TOGETHER WE CAN WIN! THE CASE FOR A YOUTH INTERNATIONAL

★ BY MARK ★ LEEDS UNI ★

Young people have been at the forefront of every movement against capitalism, war, imperialism and racism we have seen in recent years. From the streets of the West Bank and Gaza where Palestinian youth fight with rocks and slings against the might of the Israelis, to the revolts by youth and young workers in France, Greece and Chile against neo-liberal attacks on education and workers rights, young people have been fighting back, and in some cases even winning against the might of capitalism.

But while we are a majority on the streets, too often we remain either non-existent or a tiny minority on most platforms when the debates occur over what tactics and politics should be adopted to take our struggles forward to victory. As the people with the most to win and the least to lose youth have contributed hugely to the struggles against neo-liberalism and war, yet we lack an organisation which can link up our struggles nationally and internationally and fight for the revolutionary tactics and strategies we need.

That's why REVOLUTION argues that the formation of a revolutionary youth international is crucial to take our struggles forward in the coming years. You only have to look at the struggles which have occurred in Europe in the last few years to recognise the necessity of a new Youth International. In 2006 both Greece and France experienced mass movements by students, backed by education workers and militant workers unions against attacks on education and workers rights. These struggles all involved opposition to EU directives which have been agreed by the capitalist governments within the EU and which provide the framework for the privatisation of education and attacks on workers rights.

Yet these struggles were not united and coordinated internationally, even though they affect

every young person within the EU and are carried out internationally by the capitalist class. Also in 2006 the youth of Chile rose up in a mass movement against neo-liberal attacks on education and won concessions from the social democratic government in power. However these protests were not linked into the revolutionary wave that is sweeping Latin America so the potential to take the movement forward into an assault upon the foundations of capitalism in Latin America was not realised.

A revolutionary youth international is needed so young revolutionaries can forge a common action programme and link their struggles together to combat the international organisations of capital, the G8, IMF and WTO with our own revolutionary international. A youth international, within which the tactics and strategy necessary to win our struggles can be debated with a commitment from its members to action against war, racism, imperialism and capitalism is a necessity.

After all, there is no national road to socialism. Capitalism is an international system and must be defeated internationally. In this global struggle a worldwide youth international is a necessity to learn from experience of and lead the struggles of youth the world over. For example, we know that youth from France and Greece have lots to teach us in Britain about fighting attacks on education and for young workers rights, while young activists here were at the forefront of one of the biggest ever movements against war. In movements against immigration controls, neo-liberal attacks and the war on terror we can only benefit from linking up our struggles.

How would a youth international be formed? Already there exist links between youth and student movements internationally. Every year at the ESF and WSF and at countless summit sieges students and young workers from around the world have met and discussed their

struggles and the different tactics they've employed in their attempts to win. However many of these forums have been little more than talking shops, with no chance to elect a leadership and secure a commitment to action which binds all the organisations involved. At the summit sieges and international forums we call for a debate over the formation of a new youth international and appeal to all organisations of youth, students and young workers to support this call and participate in discussions with us.

Although there are many political differences between the hundreds of radical and revolutionary youth groups around the world we can forge an agreement to act in common against attacks on our living standards, rights to education and healthcare and through our global opposition to war. These commitments to action can form the basis on which to build an organisation, forging out of the need to coordinate our struggles an international organisation which can plan, debate and coordinate our struggles internationally.

The first revolutionary socialist youth organisations, formed in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries played a leading role in struggles against the First World War, against militarism, for the rights of young workers and against the degeneration and betrayal of the Second International. They were instrumental in the formation of the Communist International following the Bolshevik Revolution and bravely fought the degeneration and betrayal of the revolution by Stalinism.

Today young workers can study the lessons of the past and apply them to the struggles we face today. We can use the accumulated experience of the thousands of young people who have sacrificed their lives for revolution to ensure that ours in the 21st century are successful.



# the race to be the next leader of the world....



★ BY ALASDAIR ★ LEEDS UNI ★

As we go to press, Super Tuesday is just around the corner. This day, February 5th, will see 24 states in the US hold primaries to select the Democrat and Republican presidential candidates and could decide who gets the nomination. But why are the US presidential elections so important? Well, who's running their country is obviously important for Americans' but the power's of the American president stretch far beyond their borders. America's position as the world's one and only super power mean that the elections for US president essentially select the new world leader for the next four years.

So who are the contenders? George W. Bush - whose presidency is openly debated in the US media as the worst of all time - has served two terms (8 years) as the president and so under American laws is unable to stand again. At the moment the contest to see who will replace him as the head of the Republican Party has three front runners.

The Republicans are the more conservative party in the US, their support coming mostly from the white and Christian right. They traditionally play on 'family values' and fears of the 'other' - whether that be through racism, homophobia or any other form of narrow-mindedness you care to mention. Mike Huckabee best fits this traditional Republican template - an ordained Baptist

minister who claims his faith is inseparable from his politics. He is currently doing very well in national polls but although he fits the conservative, Christian stereotype image of a Republican president perfectly he is having trouble raising funds and getting support from big business. The bosses don't really care about 'family values' or 'Christian ideals', they care about money, and will support whoever they think will help them get it.

Another lead Republican candidate is John McCain. A high-profile senator who wants to out-Bush Bush on the war on terror, calling for a maintained or increased presence of the US armed forces in Iraq and using his earlier career as a Navy pilot in Vietnam to try and give this unpopular position credibility. Easily the candidate most committed to continuing the 'war on terror', he has worryingly already won the New Hampshire primary.

The final contender, and the one seen to be most favoured by the Republican establishment, is Mitt Romney. He is a billionaire Mormon who made health insurance mandatory in his home state of Massachusetts when he was the governor there - making him seemingly the perfect mix of hard-hitting business man who understands the need of American financiers whilst at the same time fighting for the little guy. Unfortunately for him his health plan probably only succeeded in Massachusetts because it is a relatively small, rich state

where a majority of people can afford health insurance and according to the polls over one in three Americans wouldn't vote for a Mormon president.

So who's batting for the other side? Well the fight to become the Democrat candidate is already a two-horse race. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are the two potential Democrat contenders and the contest between them is already looking like a real fight. They may be in the same party but they don't get on and have launched scathing attacks on each other. With the anti-war mood in the US so strong (over 60% of Americans believe the US army should get out of Iraq) and the Bush administration at a record low level of popularity, it seems likely that the Democrats are the favourites to bring home the election.

If either of them wins the presidency they'll be making history as either the first female or the first non-white US president. But don't let that trick you into thinking that means one of them should get the job - Maggie Thatcher was the first female British prime minister and it's hard to imagine a more ferociously anti-working class and right wing premier. Obama presents himself as 'from the street' and 'outside Washington' having worked his way up to politics through social projects and community organisation.

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★ ONE WORLD ★ ONE BATTLE ★

REVOLUTION 9

But as Clinton pointed out during that time he took bribes from slum lords to turn a blind eye to the gangs they were running.

At the same time Clinton, famous mostly for being the First Lady of Bill Clinton with his infamous affairs, is no angel. She sits on the board of directors for Walmart, without doubt one of the most evil mega-corporations going and - in a much more Washington establishment way - is just as happy as Obama to take bribes. For example Hillary once was placed in charge of researching universal health care for the US. Now, with her presidential campaign a massive receiver of funding from medical corporations, she has completely dropped any mention of this.

But here's the secret - Clinton or Obama, Republican or Democrat: it won't make any difference! Not a single one of the candidates wants to end the 'war on terror'. Sure, they might disagree on Iraq, but when it comes to Afghanistan and even Pakistan, they're all on the same page. Hillary Clinton, of the supposedly anti-war Democrats, even refuses to rule out the possibility of a nuclear attack on Pakistan!

Every single candidate described above has two main priorities - maintaining the US' position as the world's only super power and keeping the trans-national, US based mega-corporations happy. For example, Hillary Clinton's campaign has netted over \$80 million dollars in funding and not much of that came from ordinary voter donations! The figurehead may change but the real driving

force behind US imperialism remains the same - and big business in America will get what it wants, one way or the other.

Unless that is the radical migrant population, youth and working class in America can unite to put forward a solution to this problem. A workers party based on a programme that would benefit the masses, not the privileged elite, and whose representatives received a workers wage rather than millions. And more than that, a party involved in active struggle against the corrupt system which keeps the hulking mass of US business going - capitalism. Only by fighting to form such a party of struggle can the oppressed American masses truly take control of their future and wrestle it away from the hands of the bosses.

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# 90 years on...

# WOMEN FIGHTING FOR SUFFRAGE

**\* BY RACHEL \* UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA \***

**N**inety years ago women, under the Representation of the People Act, 1918, got the vote. Well, actually, it was women who were over thirty, married, propertied and graduates of a British University. This was applauded the world over as many countries still denied all women the vote. Even the 'land of the free' America did not grant women the vote until 1920. The Suffragettes (as they were nicknamed by the Daily Mail) had won the right to vote - or at least to the middle class layer of the movement had. It took another ten years for women to have the same suffrage as men in Britain.

While, many of us will be familiar with the story of the Suffragette movement, the way that it is taught in school is fundamentally misleading. First off, like the way so much British history is taught it is often used to subtly lessen our

anger at the reality of Britain today. We should be grateful to our sisters the Suffragettes for helping create the great, fair democratic society of today... Or, so the story goes, forgetting piddling issues like the enormous opposition to the Iraq war which the government simply ignored and... well, went to war.

But if that were not enough, the actual history of the Suffragette movement is often falsified as well. A typical secondary school lesson on the suffragettes would go like this: *Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst were very bad and told women to blow things up. There were some nice ladies known as the suffragists who were married to politicians and asked sweetly for the vote. Then came the war and they all clubbed together to help the good British defeat the evil Germans. Women proved themselves able so the nice men in parliament gave them the vote*. (But only if they were sensible enough to get

married, buy a house and get daddy to send them to a posh university- where they would not obtain a degree anyway.)

The reality on the other hand is a lot more complicated.

The history of the suffragette movement is like any revolutionary movement... full of splits! The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, formed in 1897, was a middle class organisation, made up of what was known as 'suffragists' because they adopted pacifist tactics. In 1903 the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) split from them due to their lack of militancy. Under the leadership of Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst they advocated direct action but it also encouraged the idea that individual daring acts alone could bring change.

The Pankhursts were right to see the need for

direct action. But it was collective action, not individual actions that could bring radical change. In 1913 Sylvia Pankhurst came to this view and set up a working class organisation based in the impoverished East End of London. The East London Federation of Suffragettes wanted a socialist struggle for women's suffrage. Sylvia knew that suffrage was a universal issue, as well as a women's issue but also thought that winning suffrage meant organising the working class.

Sylvia Pankhurst disagreed with the WSPU's involvement in the war and instead focused on the effects the imperialist war had on the poor in the East End. In 1916 it became the Worker's Suffrage Federation (WSF) and this was a very important shift. Whilst the history books will tell you it was women's 'war effort' that won them the vote, Sylvia Pankhurst argued that the struggle for suffrage should be combined with anti-war agitation.

Poor men were drafted to the front line (and dying in great numbers) while their wives were taking up their roles in the workplace. The WSF saw that women were becoming workers so they began a process of unionisation and ran educational meetings in socialist history. Sylvia worked closely with the docker's community in the East End. These movements suffered huge repression from the state, and Sylvia was arrested numerous times throughout her political career. But as anger with the war grew the working class began to mobilise across

Europe. In Russia in 1917 the working class took power in a socialist revolution. While, elsewhere in Europe the post-war revolutionary wave was put down with brute force by the state. Sylvia Pankhurst supported the Russian Revolution and became active in the Communist Party of Britain.

As the threat of workers' revolution was felt by the bourgeoisie across Europe, they realised they needed to make some concessions and one of these was woman's suffrage in Britain. But part of the reason was that the capitalists thought woman would be a conservative, pro-capitalist force compared with male workers. They obviously hadn't watched Sylvia Pankhurst's political development closely enough. As Sylvia showed that Sylvia that the fight for women's rights had to be linked with the need for a working class and socialist struggle against capitalism.



**\*WWW.WORLDREVOLUTION.ORG.UK\***

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One 17 year old student in Kabul said:

"They should forgive him. He is young. He is a student. He just printed something off the internet - he should not lose his life. We should not go back to the Taliban times. We should think of something new, we should engage with him, we should talk to him and listen to his opinion."

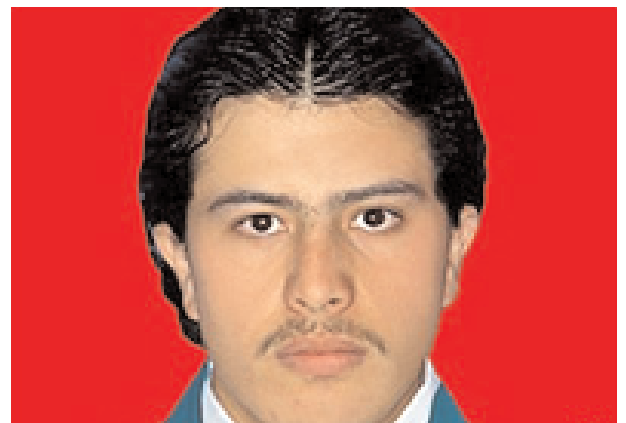
Pervez was sentenced by a Sharia court, a court which administers Islamic justice. He was tried in secret and was not allowed access to a lawyer. A report from the Left Radicals of Afghanistan, a Maoist organisation, report that Pervez claimed to have been beaten and tortured whilst in custody.

Demonstrations in Kabul and other cities across the world have begun as a movement is being built to save the life of Pervez - we must not let his death happen!

We also call for the immediate withdrawal of all occupation forces in Afghanistan, and for new, free and fair elections to a constituent assembly!

STATEMENT PASSED BY THE REVOLUTION INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL.  
FOR MORE STATEMENTS SEE [WWW.WORLDREVOLUTION.INFO](http://WWW.WORLDREVOLUTION.INFO)

# THREATENED WITH DEATH FOR READING ABOUT WOMEN'S RIGHTS





# Defend Pervez Kambaksh!

★ **REVOLUTION INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL** ★ **LONDON** ★

**R**evolution totally supports the campaign to release Pervez Kambaksh. We condemn unreservedly the attempts of the Afghan government to execute him for his 'crime'.

The sentencing of a student to death for 'insulting Islam' shows the reactionary nature of the Afghan government - despite the total support it has from the "liberal" US government. Sayed Pervez Kambaksh was sentenced to hanging for downloading an essay on women's rights, something which is apparently a crime under the Islamic state in Afghanistan.

The MP who confirmed the courts death sentence, Sibghatullah Mojadedi, is a key member of the US/UK backed government. He is a professor of Islamic studies and was a leader of one of the Mujahadeen groups that fought against the Soviet army in the 1980's. These theocratic reactionaries have no interest in democratic rights in

Afghanistan. They would be quite happy to return its legal system to the kind that the Taliban used in the 1990s.

The planned execution of the student is politically motivated. It is part of the anti democratic nature of the Afghan government and its political and ideological basis. In upholding the ruling, MPs declared that Pervez was also "an active Marxist who propagandised his opinions to others".

The secretary of the Houses of parliament declared "people should realise that as we are representatives of an Islamic country therefore we can never tolerate insults to reverences of Islamic religion." This means that the government will not tolerate any criticism whatsoever of their religious laws or beliefs - under the guise that any criticism is an insult to their religion.

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## WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Independent on Sunday got it right in an "expose" of REVOLUTIONs involvement in organising May Day 2001. It said: "REVOLUTION wants to build a revolutionary socialist mass movement and overthrow capitalism." Exactly right. We are opposed to capitalism and the misery, alienation, war and environmental destruction it creates.

We fight all forms of discrimination and oppression, whether on grounds of sex, race, nationality or sexuality.


Capitalism is a global system, so we have to fight it globally. We want to smash the borders and divisions of nations and move forward to a truly global and united humanity, without bigotry, war and class division. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our sisters and brothers in the Third World struggling to break free of the trillion dollar debt, the IMF, WTO and NATO.

We are socialists - we want to abolish capitalism and replace it with a planned economy. But we do not believe that the capitalist elite will allow their wealth and privilege to be voted out of existence. We believe it will take force to take the power and property away from the few and redistribute into the hands of the many - that means a revolution!

REVO wants young people to participate in radical politics and organise themselves. Young people can be very radical and militant, the anti war movement proved that. They should take a lead in the movement that will shape the struggle for the future.

We believe a mass movement must be built based on the support of the majority of the people - the working class. It is the working class that produces all the wealth in this society. The working class has no interest in keeping capitalism going. Only the working class has the power, the size and the traditions of organisation to bring this rotten system crashing down.

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